

Senators on a committee can simply write questions. It is called QFR—questions for the record—that they didn't get to ask in their 5-minute slots in committee.

Well, Republicans, led by Senator TOOMEY, sent almost 200 questions to Sarah Bloom Raskin. It is clear Republicans don't want her. She has been too strong standing up to Wall Street, too strong speaking out about climate in the role that the Federal Reserve has in assessing risk based on climate in loan—in lending decisions of the Fed. She is not allocating credit or telling banks whom to lend to, she is just saying we should assess risk.

For instance, you don't—it is not really very good policy to loan—to write a loan for somebody in a flood plain when they have had hurricane damage year after year after year after year and to loan a lot of money for a business. I mean, things like that that the Federal Reserve needs to assess—the banks need to assess the Fed needs.

So what happened today is Senator TOOMEY, because he didn't like Sarah Bloom Raskin's answers—as I said, he sent almost 200 letters. She answered 200 letters from Senator TOOMEY and his colleagues in 48 hours, and then another Senator—another Republican Senator sent her several more letters, and she answered those—several more questions, and she answered those when she didn't have to. So she lived up to her side of the agreement and then some.

And so Senator TOOMEY didn't like her answers, so he pulled away every Republican member from our committee. So when we met today at 2:15, as planned for 3 weeks, as noticed by the committee officially about a week ago, no Republican showed up.

And maybe that wouldn't matter, except the Senate rules are you have to have one Republican at least show up. You need 13 members of the committee to conduct business. So we had 12 Democrats sitting in the room, and the other side of the room was empty; and we couldn't take action.

So what that means is we now have Jay Powell, Chair of the Federal Reserve—nominated to be Chair of the Federal Reserve, sitting, waiting; we have Lael Brainard, Vice Chair of the Federal Reserve, nominated, sitting and waiting; we have three people who aren't even on the board of the Federal Reserve yet—Sarah Bloom Raskin and Lisa Cook and Philip Jefferson—who are just in abeyance. And maybe it doesn't matter about the three of them. They are public servants; they chose to do this. What does matter is the Federal Reserve Board only has four people on it now, and I don't know when we are going to fill it because Ranking Member TOOMEY and the other 11 Republicans on the board have decided that they don't want to show up and do their job.

I mean, when we come to the Senate—I think the Senator—the Presiding Officer, the junior Senator from

Connecticut, knows this—you aren't given a little sheet that says here is what you do here. You vote yes—check the box yes, no, or I don't think I am going to work today. I think I am going to boycott a vote. That is not what you do. You vote yes or no. They have full rights to vote no and oppose these nominees—I assume they will oppose some of them—but they really don't have the right to just decide: I am going to take my ball and go home; that I am not going to work today; that we are going to boycott this vote.

So we all took an informal vote. All 12 of us voted—well, 11 of us voted for all 6, 1 of us voted for 5 of 6—and would have confirmed them overwhelmingly if Republicans had shown up and split their votes or whatever they would have done.

You know, it is just too bad. It breaks my heart. That is not how we have ever done things in the Banking, Housing Committee. I don't argue our committee is always bipartisan; it is not. But I do argue that most of the—pretty much all of us pretty much all the time, show up and cast votes and do our jobs.

I see there are new pages here on both sides of the aisle. This is the beginning, I think, of their second week. And, you know, I am sure they have learned from their textbooks, their college books. I am sure they watch us here and they think: Well, you know, I don't really like that Senator much or—he's kind of a nice guy, but he votes whatever. But they also know we take positions. You vote yes; you vote no.

And the last thing, and then I will yield the floor, is I have heard so many Republican Members talk about inflation day after day after day, and it is a problem we have to address. It is a problem we absolutely have to address. And they, of course, blame President Biden for everything, and that is OK. I expected that.

But they talk about inflation, but then at a time when we actually could address the problems with inflation, one of the most important tools in the Federal Government to address inflation is the Federal Reserve. And the Federal Reserve—seven members of the Federal Reserve sit with the 12 Fed presidents from around the country and they make decisions on monetary policy and they debate and discuss with a wide perspective of voices and a wide array of voices.

That is just not going to happen until they decide let's vote on these five members of the Federal Reserve.

So I wanted to inform my colleagues of that. Twelve of us showed up today, and 12 members didn't. They didn't have a really good reason except they don't like the answers that one of the Fed nominees gave, and that is simply not a good reason to refuse to do your job.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, for three decades, the Violence Against Women Act has been at the forefront of our efforts to support victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. This legislation provides survivors with access to programs and resources that promote safety and healing. It bolsters our criminal justice response through protections for survivors and provides critical training for law enforcement officials. It prioritizes programs and grants to prevent domestic violence and sexual assault from occurring in the first place.

I have been a longtime victims' rights advocate, dating back to my time as attorney general of my State, and I am a proud supporter of the Violence Against Women Act.

And I think that is a common sentiment in this Chamber. Republicans and Democrats alike agree we must do more to provide services and protection for victims of domestic violence, even though we don't always agree on just exactly what those changes should look like.

Unfortunately, like many good bipartisan ideas, this became a political football over time. When the time came to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act in 2019, it was dragged through the gutter of Washington politics. Some of our friends across the aisle prioritized controversial partisan provisions over sound bipartisan policy. They even opposed a short-term reauthorization of the existing law when we couldn't agree. Ultimately, the Violence Against Women Act expired.

Here is the good news: For 3 long years, a bipartisan group of our colleagues has continued to work on a longer term reauthorization, and for a while it looked like we were making good progress.

Our friend from Iowa, Senator ERNST, is an unshakable advocate for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, and she has led efforts on this side of the aisle to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. She has worked with a bipartisan group of Senators to come up with something that is acceptable to both sides, but they have never been able to move past the controversial sticking points until now. Apparently, the tides have shifted, and I am grateful for that. After 3 years of waiting, we have seen real progress on efforts to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.

Last week, a bipartisan group of Senators introduced legislation to extend and modernize that legislation, and I am proud to be a cosponsor of that. Senator ERNST from Iowa and Senator MURKOWSKI, our Alaska colleague, have

led this effort on the Republican side, and I want to commend our colleagues for their leadership. They have put in countless hours over the last few years to reach this compromise. Obviously, it was not easy. The fact that this bill already has more than 20 bipartisan cosponsors speaks volumes about their success.

We couldn't have gotten to this point without the dedication of our friend, the senior Senator from California, Senator FEINSTEIN, who has been engaged in these discussions from the beginning. I appreciate the hard work that she and Senator DURBIN, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, have put into this bill and their willingness to make sensible compromises so we can, hopefully, get this signed into law without further delay.

Like all legislation, this bill is not perfect, but as the saying goes, you can't let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

Throughout the negotiating process, I have raised concerns about some of the provisions, and I have seen our colleagues work in good faith with us to address many of those issues. There is no question, in my mind, that this is a good bill that will go a long way to modernize the Violence Against Women Act and ensure that it continues to serve survivors.

The VAWA Reauthorization Act extends this legislation through 2027 and builds on the advancements made in previous reauthorizations. It improves access to services, especially those in rural communities with fewer resources. It promotes partnerships with law enforcement and victim services organizations to provide victim-centered training for law enforcement officers. It improves grants that help school-based professionals connect students with victim services, and it strengthens existing campus grant programs for colleges and universities. It establishes a pilot program to support domestic violence victims seeking employment. It takes aim at relatively new threats, including cyber crimes, by establishing a national resource center on cyber crimes against individuals.

This legislation also invests in a broad range of grant programs, trainings, and resources to support survivors of domestic violence and prevent similar crimes from occurring in the future.

I am glad this legislation includes provisions from a number of bipartisan bills that I have introduced with colleagues here in the Senate.

One example is a bill that the Presiding Officer will appreciate, which I introduced with Senator COONS, called the NICS Denial Notification Act.

If someone attempts to purchase a gun—in other words, they lie about their legal qualification to purchase a gun—but is denied when the NICS background check system comes back with a hit, indicating that they are disqualified for one of a variety of legal reasons, right now, local law enforce-

ment is not notified that somebody tried to buy a firearm and lied about it and was denied access to that firearm because of the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

Under current law, Federal officials are notified when individuals, including convicted felons and domestic abusers, fail a background check, but they are not required to notify State and local law enforcement—the people in the best position to actually be on the lookout for people who may be a danger to their communities and to themselves.

This legislation will change that. This legislation will require the Department of Justice to notify the relevant State and local authorities within 24 hours of a failed background check.

Now, there are some organizations that are disparaging this particular provision. They are basically misrepresenting what it does. So I want to be clear about what it does do.

What it does do is address somebody who lies in the course of filling out a background check, indicating that they are not disqualified, only to find out, when checking the system, that they, in fact, are. Obviously, these folks are up to no good if they are lying about their ability to purchase a firearm under current law. It just makes sense, in addition to Federal officials being notified of convicted felons and domestic violence abusers, that State and local law enforcement be notified as well. This notification would include the name of the individual as well as when and where they attempted to purchase a firearm. This information gives law enforcement the ability to investigate and intervene before a potentially deadly attack occurs. It should set off all sorts of alarms when a convicted felon or domestic violence abuser lies when attempting to purchase a firearm.

The Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act also includes legislation that I introduced with Senator DURBIN, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. It is called Supporting Access to Nurse Exams Act.

Sexual assault nurse examiners, known as SANEs, are on the frontlines of our fight to support victims of sexual assault. These are the nurses who perform the forensic examinations on rape victims and who help to identify and convict sexual offenders.

This provision improves an existing grant program that funds sexual assault forensic exam programs. We don't have enough of these SANEs, or nurse examiners. This bill will put more money into the field in order to train more of these SANEs, to provide for their salaries, and to increase access in areas of the country that need SANEs more, particularly in rural areas.

These men and women are crucial to our efforts to deliver justice, and this is an important step we can take to address the nationwide shortage of sexual assault nurses.

Over the years, the Senate and the Congress have done a lot to eliminate the rape kit backlog, which at one point totaled a reported 400,000 in backlog rape kits. These rape kits are forensic examination kits that contain DNA, which is so essential in identifying the perpetrators of sexual assault and which has the miraculous ability—or seemingly miraculous ability—to actually exonerate some people who may be misidentified through visual identification.

It also helps, over a period of a long time, to identify people who may have evaded prosecution because of the statute of limitations. Many of these individuals who commit these sexual assaults will do so on a serial basis. So once we have been able to identify them through successful rape kit evaluations, we can bring them to justice.

Once again, I want to commend Senators Ernst and Murkowski for their tireless efforts, on behalf of victims nationwide, to get us to this point.

The Violence Against Women Act has changed the lives—improved the lives, actually—of countless survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. So it is time for us to come together and reauthorize this crucial program.

I am proud to support this legislation, and I hope Senator SCHUMER, the majority leader, can find time to put it on the Senate's calendar and vote it out without delay.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING LELAND CHRISTENSEN

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I am just profoundly sad and also humbled and proud to honor the memory of a cherished son of Wyoming. More than anything, I rise to honor my longtime friend Leland Christensen.

Leland was most recently State director for my U.S. Senate office. Truly, his death cuts me to the depths of my heart. I have known Leland for decades, and there are few losses in my life that I have ever felt as deeply as this one. Leland was all Wyoming. He was tough as nails, endlessly patient, and unwaveringly kind.

Prior to his time in my office, Leland served the people of Wyoming and our great Nation in a number of roles. He was formerly a member of the Wyoming National Guard; a sheriff; a county commissioner for Teton County; a State senator and chair of our State senate's Judiciary Committee; a deputy director of the Wyoming Office of Homeland Security; and, of course, most recently, State director for our U.S. Senate office.

When I was elected to the U.S. Senate, I knew I needed Leland on my